

DRAFT

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

**BIOLOGICAL SURVEY, REPORT FORMAT AND
MAPPING REQUIREMENTS**

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP

**Department of Planning and Land Use
Department of Public Works**

**CIRCULATED FOR PUBLIC REVIEW
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PURPOSE

These Biological Survey and Report Requirements provide guidance on conducting biological resources surveys and preparing reports for discretionary projects being processed by the Land Use and Environment Group. These guidelines are designed to:

1. Ensure the quality, accuracy and completeness of biological surveys and reports.
2. Aid in staff's efficient and consistent review of maps and documents from different consultants.
3. Provide adequate information to make appropriate planning decisions and to make determinations regarding conformance with applicable regulations.
4. Increase the efficiency of the environmental review process and avoid unnecessary time delays.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

All biological maps and reports shall follow the requirements in this document. The overall length of reports and the amount of information to include will vary depending on the size and scope of the project, the regional setting, the biological resources present and the degree of impacts proposed.

When biological resources are present on a project site, the County's Scoping Letter may require that one of the following documents be submitted.

1.1 Full Biological Resource Report (Full Report)

A Full Biological Resource Report (Full Report) is required for larger projects and/or projects with potential significant biological impacts. The full report must include a Biological Resource Map.

1.2 Biological Resource Letter Report (Letter Report)

A Biological Resources Letter Report may be adequate for smaller projects and those with limited biological resources present or expected. Based on the information provided in the biological letter report, DPLU may require additional focused surveys and/or a Full Biological Resource Report. The letter report must include a Biological Resource Map.

1.3 Biological Resource Map (Bio Map)

For projects with limited natural or naturalized areas and no sensitive species anticipated, a Biological Resources Map may be adequate without a report.

2.0 SURVEY AND REPORT FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

2.1 General Report Guidelines

All written reports shall follow these general guidelines:

- Reports should be technical in nature and should avoid anecdotal or extraneous information.
- Reports should be concise and written in a professional manner suitable for peer review. Staff may reject reports based on quality if the report is written in such a manner that a timely and accurate review cannot be completed.
- Biological reports should be bound such that staff may easily review the document. Shorter reports may be stapled, but longer documents should be bound by other methods, such as comb binding.
- Attached plot plans and Biological Resource Maps must be to scale and contain a north arrow and both number and bar scales. When maps are reduced, adjust the scale, or mark the map "Reduced/Use Bar Scale".

- For Full Biological Resource Reports, each chapter and subsection of the report should be clearly delineated with bold print and/or underlining and will use the numerical headings contained in these Biological Resources Survey and Report requirements.
- Draft copies of the report shall have all changes made in response to staff comments in strikeout/underline form. Final copies of the report shall be clean, with all editing marks removed.

All biological reports will be reviewed for technical accuracy and completeness by a staff biologist. Reports are considered draft until staff determines the report to be complete. Each submittal and review of a draft biological report is considered an “iteration.” During each iteration, staff will either determine the report to be complete or respond with comments for necessary changes. The County expects that the first iteration will be as complete and comprehensive as possible to address issues in the Scoping Letter. However, each report may have up to three iterations, after which project denial may be recommended due to inadequate environmental progress.

2.2 Full Biological Resource Report

2.2.1 Outline

The required sections of the full Biological Resource Report are provided in the outline below:

FULL BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES REPORT OUTLINE

COVER PAGE

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- F. **Biological Resource Map and project plot plan/map (unless included within body of report)**
- G. **Open Space Map (if applicable, unless included within body of report)**
- H. **Signed protocol survey reports**

2.2.2 Content

Note: The numbering identified below should be used when preparing technical studies. The titles are shown in italics only for purposes of this document and are not required to be formatted in italics for the technical study.

COVER PAGE

The cover page shall include the following information:

- Project common name
- Project numbers (i.e. TM, ZAP, etc.) including the environmental log number (ER)
- Date (original report date plus all revisions) must be revised during each iteration of the draft report)
- Name of County Approved CEQA Consultant preparing document, firm name (if applicable) and address
- Signature of County Approved CEQA Consultant
- Project proponent's name and address
- The following statement: Prepared for The County of San Diego

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The table of contents must follow the order and format outlined in this document. Page numbers should be assigned when possible. Titles of each Appendix or Attachment should be listed in the order in which they are found in the document.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Provide a list of terms and acronyms used in the report.

SUMMARY (ABSTRACT)

Provide a brief summary of the project, the biological resources present on the site, potential impacts and proposed mitigation. No new information should be provided in the summary that is not further explained elsewhere in the document. The purpose of the summary is to provide a quick reference for the public and decision-makers. Therefore, the language should be less technical than that used in the remainder of the document.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Discuss the purpose of the report. Depending on the site location, type of project and biological resources, the report may document compliance with the County's MSCP Subarea Plan, Resource Protection Ordinance, Biological Mitigation Ordinance or Habitat Loss Permit Ordinance and all applicable federal and state laws.

Example language: "The purpose of this report is to document the biological resources identified as present or potentially present on the project site; identify potential biological resource impacts resulting from the proposed project; and recommend measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate significant impacts consistent with federal, state and local rules and regulations including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan, Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) and Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO)."

1.2 Project Location and Description

Project Location. Discuss the project location in the regional and local context. Include a USGS topographic map with the site and APN clearly identified as numbered figure(s).

Project Description. Provide a very detailed description of the project, including all on-site and off-site components and any design alternatives. An 8.5"x11" or 11"x17" copy of the plot plan/map must be attached to the report as (a) numbered figure(s).

Describe the whole of the project, not just the immediate action being pursued. For example, a Tentative Map or Tentative Parcel Map proposes to subdivide property. The project in question is not just the increase in the number of lots, but the ultimate outcome of residential or commercial development. Another example is an application for a grading permit. The project is not just the immediate grading, but also the end result for which the land was graded.

The project description should be as detailed as possible, including details such as:

- Size of project site and area proposed for development.
- Purpose and scale of proposed uses associated with the project, such as residential development or recreational camping.
- Proposed structures (size, location, purpose, etc.).
- Location of all easements, including those for biological open space, steep slope easements, limited building zone easements, utilities and roads.
- Proposed or potential uses within open space, including proposed buffers, existing structures and/or uses that will continue under the proposed action, any requirements for access to archaeological/cultural sites, etc.
- Off-site improvements, such as for roads, utility extensions, or stormwater facilities.
- Fire fuel modification and vegetation management requirements.
- Construction equipment staging areas.
- Proposed site access.

1.3 Survey Methods

Provide a discussion of literature reviews done prior to initiation of the surveys. Examples may include, but are not limited to: the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service map for the project area; a database query of potential on-site sensitive species based on a determination of the site physical characteristics (e.g., location, elevation, soils/substrate, and topography); documentation of California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Geographical Information System (GIS) records for the project vicinity; and previous reports prepared for the project area.

Describe the methods and materials used to survey the property. At a minimum, the entire property must be walked and all biological resources recorded and mapped according to the County's Biological Resource Mapping Requirements. The length of time a survey should take is entirely dependent upon the size of the property and the resources present. Staff may request an additional survey if the time spent in the field does not appear adequate to have recorded all resources or the results of

the survey would have been significantly affected by season, time of day or weather conditions.

Additional directed surveys may also be required based on season or sensitivity of species. Directed surveys must be performed by biologists with demonstrable knowledge in field detection of the subject species. Focused surveys for federally listed species must follow USFWS protocol, when such protocol exists. Permit numbers for biologists performing these focused surveys must be provided for each survey must be attached as a table in the biological report. If no protocol has been established, the methods of the directed search must be described in the report. At the very least, directed surveys should include walking transects across all areas of the property with potential habitat for the species. All point locations and inferred territories of these species must be included on the Biological Resources Map.

When a sensitive species is identified on a property, the number and density of individuals should be provided. It may also be necessary to provide these measurements (through additional field work or historical/available data) for off-site areas in order to fully determine the true size and extent of the local population. When feasible, the actual number of individuals should be counted in the field. When a plant species covers several acres (3 acres or more), the number and density may be estimated using a quadrat sampling method. When the plant species is a ground-cover variety or individuals are not easily discernable from one another, acreage may be used as a measurement and the density presented as a percentage cover per acre. For wildlife species, the number of individuals should be approximated based on actual sightings and other available signs, such as fecal deposits, tracks and nests or burrows. The method by which the number of individuals and density of a species is determined must be described in the biological report.

Wetlands surveys will be required when a wetland resource is identified on project site. A basic wetland survey consists of mapping the boundaries of the wetland habitat based on the specific County, State and Federal wetland definitions. Field site visits and aerial photographs generally provide enough information to complete the basic wetland survey. However, a full wetland delineation survey following the US Army Corps of Engineers standards, including soil testing, may be required when the boundaries of the wetlands are not easily discernable.

This section of the report should also include the following:

- Discuss any significant limitations to each of the surveys performed, such as timing, season or inability to access portions of the property. All reports should acknowledge the existence of time and seasonal variations such that not all species on the site would be detected.
- It may be necessary to include a map of the property depicting the areas surveyed. For example, some lands may not have been surveyed because access was denied. Where directed sensitive species surveys are required, portions of the property may not provide suitable habitat/conditions for the

species. A map shall be included when transects, quadrat sampling or sample points are used.

- This section shall include a numbered table listing the dates, times and weather conditions (as applicable) as well as the biologist(s) and any applicable permit numbers performing each survey.

1.4 Environmental Setting

Describe the physical characteristics, such as topography, elevation, climate, water resources and soil types. Briefly describe the general vicinity in terms of type and density of development and infrastructure. Specify public and private ownership of land in the vicinity, particularly for preserved lands. Describe any preserved lands adjacent or contiguous with the site. Describe the existing land uses on site and on surrounding lands, including unauthorized activities.

1.4.1 Regional Context

Provide a general overview of the following, as applicable. This section is not intended to provide detailed analysis of habitats, corridors, etc., as that analysis is included in later sections.

- Location relative to approved or proposed conservation plans
- Adopted or proposed NCCP subareas
- NCCP designations (such as PAMA, BRCA, Take Authorized, etc.)
- Adjacent to preserved lands, national forests, BLM lands
- Jurisdictional waterways and watersheds
- The section should reference aerial photos as numbered figure(s) showing the relationship of the project site with surrounding lands.

1.4.2 Habitat Types/Vegetation Communities

Describe each vegetation community identified on the property, addressing the following information. This section shall include a numbered table containing acreages.

- Reference the modified Holland code classification system for each vegetation community.
- List the dominant (indicator) species present.
- Describe the quality of the habitat in general, including the level of previous disturbance.
- Describe the species abundance, composition and diversity in terms of vegetative structure.
- When applicable, provide the sensitivity level (i.e. Tier level in MSCP) of each habitat type.
- Discuss the conservation value of each habitat type in terms of regional and local importance relative to other areas of similar habitat off-site.
- Discuss whether the habitat type is considered sensitive by the County, state or federal agencies, as defined by these requirements.

- Describe any unique habitat types and/or physical features of the land that occur on-site. Unique habitats are generally those considered rare due to physical constraints, such as soil type or topography, or those habitats created by unusual circumstances. Examples of unique habitats include vernal pools, gabbro-based or rare successional habitat communities. Unique habitats may also be defined by a defined physical or biological habitat component providing a specialized function for a specific limited distribution species such as butterfly hill-topping or a heron rookery. Unique features include any physical characteristic that might have unusual or exceptional biological value such as cliff faces, rock outcrops, sandstone bluffs, stream banks and bars. Unique features will often be geological in nature, but may also be the result of a water resource, soil, or manufactured structures functioning as roosts or rookeries.

1.4.3 *Flora*

Provide a general overview of the types of plant species identified on the site. For example, determine whether the majority of the plant species are non-native, disturbance-related or natives generally found in more pristine environments. Briefly list the more common plant species identified. A complete list of all plant species identified on the site must be attached to the report, including the common name, scientific name and the vegetation community in which the plant species was identified.

1.4.4 *Fauna*

Format and discussion of fauna shall follow the instructions in Section 1.4.3.

1.4.5 *Sensitive Plant Species*

The report must address all sensitive plant species that occur or have a high probability of occurring on the site or on land immediately adjacent to the site. This section should discuss the results of any directed surveys or habitat assessments. Sensitive plant species are those listed on the County's Sensitive Plant List.

Species are considered sensitive if they are listed by any County, State or Federal agencies or if they are recognized by a conservancy or scientific group as being depleted, potentially depleted, declining, rare, endemic, threatened, endangered or otherwise of special concern. Potential to occur is derived from locality, known populations, soil or habitat types, elevation and a number of other factors.

The report must provide a table listing any sensitive species detected or having potential to be present, including its conservation status, preferred habitat (i.e. vegetation, soil, elevation range, etc.) and whether the species was detected on the site. For species not detected, the table must include an evaluation of the potential for the species to be present currently or in the future and the probable reason why the species was not detected during the survey.

The report text must also contain a separate discussion for each sensitive species identified. For each species, provide the number, density and location of individuals on the site (refer to *Section 1.3* for methods of measurement). The report should also discuss the regional significance of the population found on the site. For each sensitive species identified, a Natural Diversity Database Form must be completed with one copy sent to the California Department of Fish and Game and one copy attached to the final report.

1.4.5 *Sensitive Wildlife Species*

Format and discussion of sensitive wildlife species shall follow the instructions in *Section 1.4.5*. Sensitive wildlife species are those listed on the County's Sensitive Animal List.

1.4.6 *Wetlands/Jurisdictional Waters*

Describe any wetland resources and jurisdictional waters identified on the site. Provide an estimate of acreage classified as County, State and/or Federal wetlands and jurisdictional waters along with an explanation as to how the boundaries were delineated. Include a brief list of the dominant plant and wildlife species present. Describe the quality of the wetland habitat in terms of disturbance, canopy cover, species diversity and connectivity to off-site habitat. Discuss the wetland's local and regional importance.

Discuss the wetland functions and values, and include a description of the habitats' location relative to hydrologic features (*i.e.*, what is downstream from the waterway). Wetland function refers to biophysical benefits, such as groundwater recharge and discharge, flood control, flow alteration, sediment stabilization, erosion control, toxicant retention, nutrient removal and cycling, and wildlife habitat for diversity and abundance. Wetland value refers to anthropomorphic benefits such as commercial enterprise, recreation and waste assimilation, and non-market values such as aesthetics, uniqueness and heritage.

1.4.7 *Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors*

Describe the extent of habitat connectivity between on and off-site lands. Provide a general description of any connection that exists, including estimated acreage and habitat types. Since indirect habitat connectivity is often very important, especially in more urbanized area, discuss the project site relative to surrounding areas that might serve as an island or "stepping-stone"/archipelago connection. When habitat connectivity exists between on and off-site areas, list the species that are likely to use the connection.

Discuss whether the connectivity creates a block of habitat with one or more of the following values:

- A core area of habitat suitable for resident populations
- A local wildlife corridor
- A block of habitat within a larger regional linkage

This section must also discuss wildlife corridors and linkages. Include a separate discussion of local wildlife corridors and regional linkages, addressing the presence or absence of both. Corridors are generally local pathways connecting short distances usually covering one or two main types of vegetation communities. Linkages are landscape level connections between very large core areas and generally span several thousand feet and cover multiple habitat types. Regional linkages have been identified on the MSCP Subarea Plan maps. Outside MSCP, regional vegetation maps and aerial photos may be used to evaluate the potential for a linkage.

When discussing wildlife corridors and linkages, describe the topography, habitat connectivity (direct or indirect), and vegetative cover. Discuss whether linear features, such as watercourses, ridges or valleys, are present. If a corridor is present, provide widths, lengths and describe existing adjacent land uses. List the types of species that are likely to use the corridor. Describe any existing development or circumstance that might hinder existing corridors or prevent future connections from being formed.

1.5 Applicable Regulations

Briefly detail the County, State and Federal environmental regulations that apply to the project.

2.0 *PROJECT EFFECTS*

This section shall summarize biological effects anticipated as a result of the proposed action, including but not limited to construction activities, post-construction impacts and off-site impacts.

For habitats/vegetation communities, including wetlands and jurisdictional waters, summarize the acreages in a numbered table, generally following the example below. For species impacts, summarize the anticipated loss of sensitive plant and wildlife populations or individuals. Summarize any impacts to wildlife corridors, linkages and wildlife nursery sites.

Table X. Sample, Habitat/Vegetation Communities and Impacts

Habitat / Vegetation Community	Existing (acres) ¹	Impacts (acres) ¹	Impact Neutral ²
TOTAL			

¹ An estimate of the acreage present, generally rounded to the nearest tenth of an acre. For particularly sensitive habitats such as wetlands and vernal pools, the acreage may be presented in square footage or hundredths/thousandths of an acre.

² Include a column for impact neutral acreage if applicable. For example, all wetlands and wetland buffers shall be counted as “impact neutral.”

3.0 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

3.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

3.2 Analysis of Project Effects

Using the guidelines in *Section 3.1*, discuss the significance of any potential direct impacts to sensitive species identified on the site. Impacts are expected when a plant species was identified outside of areas proposed for preservation, or a wildlife species was identified as nesting, foraging or otherwise occurring in areas outside of the land proposed for preservation. Provide numbers of individuals and relative percentage of the population that will be impacted. Refer to *Section 1.3* for methods by which to measure population size and density. The analysis must make a conclusion, based on the significance guidelines, whether or not these impacts are significant.

Guidelines that do not apply to the proposed action shall be listed with a brief explanation of why the guideline does not apply. For example, “The proposed project will not result in significant impacts under the following guidelines for the following reasons:

3.1.A. There are no state or federally listed species that would be impacted by the project.

3.1.D. The site contains no habitat suitable for the arroyo toad.

3.1.E. There are no golden eagles on site or within 4,000 feet of the site.”

3.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

A reasonable list of cumulative projects should be compiled based on past, present, and future projects that could also cumulatively contribute to the project's significant impacts. For each potential impact, a study area must be defined. For special status species, the study area should be based on the natural history of the species. Analyze the significance of the cumulative impact to special status species. Determine whether the project makes a cumulatively considerable contribution to special status species. When the project's contribution to the cumulative impact is significant, the analysis shall discuss mitigating effects of existing regional conservation plans if applicable. Mitigation may also include a reduction in the project's contribution to the loss, or a specific on- or off-site mitigation plan.

The analysis of potential cumulative impacts should be structured as follows: "The cumulative projects study area was chosen because xxx. The cumulative projects will impact xxx (sample: xxx individuals or xxx percent). This is/is not significant because xxx. (If significant) The project's contribution is xxx percent of the total cumulative impact. This is/is not considerable because xxx." Cumulative mitigation measures should only address significant cumulative impacts.

3.4 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations

Provide brief descriptions of proposed mitigation measures and design considerations. Refer to Attachment A of these guidelines for the County's Typical Mitigation Measures. For each measure, state the impact being mitigated. Some mitigation measures will require additional details, such as a Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Habitat Management Plan (HMP).

3.5 Conclusions

For each significant impact, determine if the proposed mitigation measures have reduced the significance level to "less than significant" in accordance with the stated Significance Guidelines.

4.0 RIPARIAN HABITAT OR SENSITIVE NATURAL COMMUNITY

4.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

4.2 Analysis of Project Effects

Using the guidelines in *Section 4.1*, discuss the significance of all direct and indirect vegetation and habitat impacts that might occur as a result of the proposed project. The evaluation should consider the type and density of proposed development, potential uses within the open space and basic project design. Along with each impact, provide a determination as to whether the impact is significant and whether mitigation may be applied to reduce the significance. The determination of significance should be accompanied by a brief explanation as to how the conclusion was reached.

All potential impacts resulting from any part of the project must be included, even if the impacts are temporary, off-site or may not occur until a future phase of the project, such as grading following a Tentative Map. The impact analysis shall be separated according to the significance guidelines listed in *Section 4.1*. Guidelines that do not apply to the proposed action shall be listed with a brief explanation of why the guideline does not apply.

Habitat that will potentially be removed as a result of grading or clearing associated with the project is considered impacted. For most discretionary actions, any habitat not protected within open space easements is considered impacted since few restrictions apply to prevent future clearing. Use permits and other types of actions tied directly to plot plans may, in some cases, consider impacts only to that land specifically proposed for development. In all cases, fire fuel modification and vegetation management requirements, and off-site improvements are part of the project and are considered direct impacts.

When a project proposes a subdivision that will result in residential lots larger than 15 acres each, the applicant may choose to either consider the whole site impacted, or to limit the impact areas. For these large lot subdivisions, the following guidance applies:

1. The applicant for the proposed map may choose to consider all land not included within an open space easement as impacted. By doing this during the map phase, impacts would be assessed and mitigation proposed for the entire site. The future parcel owner would still be required to obtain permits for new discretionary actions not foreseen in the map phase (such as additional fire fuel modification and vegetation management, agricultural clearing, and clearing for accessory structures), but the environmental review process for those future discretionary actions would be shortened.
2. The applicant may choose to have just 5 acres considered in the impact and mitigation analysis. The proposed map must show where these 5 acres would likely be cleared and those would be the areas analyzed. The environmental documents would state that any remaining areas not included within open space were considered “impact neutral” for purposes of analysis, meaning that the area is not considered impacted or used for mitigation credit. Any future clearing

within the “impact neutral” areas would require appropriate permits and full environmental review.

The analysis must make a conclusion, based on the significance guidelines, whether or not these impacts are significant.

4.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in *Section 3.3*. For habitats and vegetation communities, the study area may be the County defined “ecoregion” or other applicable area. Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in *Section 3.3*.

4.4 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations

Provide brief descriptions of proposed mitigation measures and design considerations. Refer to Attachment A of these guidelines for the County’s Typical Mitigation Measures. For each measure, state the impact being mitigated. Some mitigation measures may require additional details, such as:

1. Revegetation Plans – a Final Plan may be required as a condition of the project, to be completed at a later date (i.e. prior to grading or finalizing the map). The biological report shall provide a Conceptual Revegetation Plan in accordance with the County’s Guidelines.
2. Resource Management Plans (RMP) (formerly known as Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) – a Final Plan may be required as a condition of the project, to be completed at a later date (i.e. prior to grading or finalizing the map). The biological report shall provide a Conceptual Resource Management Plan in accordance with the County’s Guidelines.

4.5 Conclusions

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in *Section 3.5*.

5.0 JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS

5.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means?

Refer to Section 4.1 guidelines above.

5.2 Analysis of Project Effects

Describe all impacts to Federal, State, and County wetlands. The report shall state whether impacts would require State or Federal wetland permits or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) permits. The analysis must make a conclusion, based on the significance guidelines, whether or not these impacts are significant. Note: for projects subject to the RPO, avoidance of wetlands and wetland buffers is required.

5.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.3.

5.4 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.4.

5.5 Conclusions

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Sections 3.5.

6.0 WILDLIFE MOVEMENT AND NURSERY SITES

6.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

6.2 Analysis of Project Effects

Using the guidelines in Section 6.1, discuss the project site in terms of existing wildlife corridors and linkages and wildlife nursery sites. Discuss corridor/linkage functions and what species are likely to be using the site for movement and breeding activities. Analyze whether there will be impacts to existing habitat connectivity both on- and off-site, or to a native wildlife nursery sites, based on the likely functions that will be retained after project implementation. Provide details such as extent of impact and whether connectivity and nursery sites might be retained elsewhere.

This section must also discuss the potential for increased wildlife road fatalities due to increased project-related traffic. Analyze the potential impacts, including the effects of corridor constriction or elimination from the project itself and/or from any proposed barriers or crossings. Include details regarding corridor widths and lengths that will result from the project. The analysis must make a conclusion, based on the significance guidelines, whether or not these impacts are significant.

Guidelines that do not apply to the proposed action shall be listed with a brief explanation of why the guideline does not apply.

6.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.3.

6.4 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.4.

6.5 Conclusions

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.5.

7.0 LOCAL POLICIES, ORDINANCES, ADOPTED PLANS

7.1 Guideline for the Determination of Significance

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan?

7.2 Analysis of Project Effects

Using the guidelines in Section 6.1, discuss how the project will comply with local policies, ordinances, and plans. Guidelines that do not apply to the proposed action shall be listed with a brief explanation of why the guideline does not apply.

7.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.3.

7.4 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.4.

7.5 Conclusions

Format and discussion shall follow the instructions in Section 3.5.

8.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

This section shall provide a brief text summary of project impacts and mitigation. The report shall include a numbered table with habitat acreages, generally following

the example below:

Table X.X. Sample, Habitat/Vegetation Communities, Impacts, Mitigation

Habitat / Vegetation Community	Existing (acres) ¹	Impacts (acres) ¹	Mitigation Ratio	Preserved On-Site (acres) ¹	Impact Neutral (acres) ²	Off-Site Mitigation
Total						

¹ An estimate of the acreage present, generally rounded to the nearest tenth of an acre. However, for sensitive habitats (such as wetlands and vernal pools), the acreage may be presented in square footage or hundredths/thousandths of an acre.

² Include a column for impact neutral acreage if applicable. For example, all wetlands and wetland buffers are counted as "impact neutral."

9.0 REFERENCES

10.0 LIST OF PREPARERS AND PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

Provide a list of preparers, noting each person included on the County list of approved consultants. Note that the principal author must be on the list or the report will not be accepted.

TECHNICAL APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

The Table of Contents shall list each document attached to the report in the order in which they are referenced in the report. The following documents must be included in the report, either in the text (if size is appropriate) or as an Attachment:

- A. Observed Species Lists, Flora and Fauna. A list of all species identified on the site, including the common name, scientific name and the vegetation community in which the species was identified.
- B. Potential Sensitive Species List, Flora and Fauna (format follows) to contain all sensitive species with the potential to reside, forage or otherwise use the site. The table will include the conservation status, preferred habitat (i.e. vegetation, soil, elevation range, etc.) and whether the species was detected on the site. For species not detected, the table will include a determination of the potential for the species to be present currently or in the future and factual basis for that determination (the probable reason why the species was not detected during the survey).
- C. A California Natural Diversity Database Form (CNDDDB) must be attached to the final report for each sensitive species that was identified on the site. A copy of the CNDDDB form shall also be sent to the CDFG.

- D. Biological Resource Map and project plot plan/map (if not clearly shown on the biological resource map), unless these are included as clear reduced figures elsewhere in the document (clear 11x17-inch maximum figures are preferred).
- E. Open Space Map and reduced copy of the Open Space Map to be included within the document (11x17 inch max), showing location of fencing and signage, if open space easements are proposed.
- F. Signed survey reports for all directed or focused surveys. When applicable, a copy of the survey results letter sent to USFWS should be included.
- G. Vicinity and USGS topographic maps if not included elsewhere in the document.
- H. Any other documents necessary to supplement the information provided within the biological report.

Sensitive Species Table Format. The County will provide a list of sensitive plant and animal species with the potential to exist on the project site. The report shall include each sensitive species on the list in table form documenting its sensitivity status (County, State and Federal, as appropriate), its preferred habitat and whether it was detected on-site by direct or indirect evidence. If the species was not detected, the table shall address its potential for occurrence (habitat assessment) with facts to support each conclusion. The following table shows the headings for the table that can be prepared in portrait or landscape format.

Scientific Name and Common Name	Sensitivity Code & Status (Federal, State, County, other)	Habitat Preference/ Requirements	Verified On Site Yes/No (direct / indirect evidence)	Potential to Occur On Site (Observed or L/M/H/U)	Factual basis for determination of occurrence potential

Sensitivity codes shall be defined at the end of the table.

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2.3 Biological Resource Letter Report

A letter report may be adequate to document biological resources if the project site is small and/or the site has limited biological resources. Based on the information provided in the biological letter report, DPLU may require additional focused surveys and/or a Full Biological Resource Report.

2.3.1 Outline

The following outline should be followed when preparing a Biological Resources Letter Report.

Biological Resource Letter Report Outline

Summary

Introduction, Project Description, Location, Setting

Habitats / Vegetation Communities

Special Status Species

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways

Other Unique Features/Resources

Significance of Project Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Cumulative Impacts

References

Preparer and Persons/Organizations Contacted

Attachments

2.3.2 Contents

Summary

Provide a brief summary of the project, the biological resources present on the site, potential impacts and proposed mitigation. No new information should be provided in the summary that is not further explained elsewhere in the document. The purpose of the summary is to provide a quick reference for the public and decision-

makers. Therefore, the language should be less technical than that used in the remainder of the document.

Introduction, Project Description, Location, Setting

Completely describe the proposed project, including all off-site impacts and fire fuel modification and vegetation management requirements. Provide a brief summary of the project location, survey dates and times, and biological resources present on the site.

Habitats / Vegetation Communities

- Estimate acres present for each habitat type / vegetation community, rounded to the nearest tenth of an acre. However, for sensitive habitats (such as wetlands and vernal pools), the acreage may be presented in square footage or hundredths/thousandths of an acre.
- List dominant (indicator) species present.
- Describe habitat quality, including the level of previous disturbance.
- Discuss species abundance, composition and diversity in terms of vegetative structure and wildlife present.
- Determine and factually support the habitat sensitivity level (i.e. Tier level in MSCP) for each habitat type.
- Discuss the conservation value of each habitat type in terms of regional and local importance relative to other areas of similar habitat off-site.

Special Status Species

- Address all sensitive species with potential to occur on the site or on land immediately adjacent to the site.
- When a sensitive species is identified on a property, provide the number and density of individuals. It may also be necessary to provide these measurements for off-site areas in order to fully determine the true size and extent of the local population. When feasible, the actual number of individuals should be counted in the field. When a plant species covers several acres (3 acres or more), the number and density may be estimated using a quadrat sampling method. When the plant species is a ground-cover variety or individuals are not easily discernable from one another, acreage may be used as a measurement and the density presented as a percentage cover per acre. For animal species, the number of individuals should be approximated based on actual sightings and other available signs, such as fecal deposits, tracks and nests or burrows. The method by which the number of individuals and density of a species is determined must be described in the biological report.
- Generally, if protocol or focused surveys are required a Full Biological Report is required. However, if Protocol Surveys are required with a Letter Report, summarize the report conclusions and attach the Protocol Survey report. If focused surveys (non-protocol surveys) are required, the Letter Report shall

present the field methods and results. Focused surveys must be done by biologist(s) with demonstrable knowledge in field detection of the subject species. Protocol surveys for federally listed species must follow USFWS protocol. Permit numbers for biologists performing these focused surveys must be provided and field notes for each survey must be attached to the biological report. All point locations and inferred territories of these species must be included on the Biological Resources Map. For species too numerous to map or where exact locations are not known, a notation on the map will suffice.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways

- Describe all wetland and water resources found on the site.
- Estimate acres classified as County, State and/or Federal wetlands along with an explanation as to how the boundaries were delineated.
- Include a brief list of the dominant plant and wildlife species present that were either detected or likely using the site.
- Describe wetland habitat quality including disturbance, canopy cover, species diversity and connectivity to off-site habitat.
- Discuss the wetland in terms of local and regional importance.
- Wetlands must be accurately plotted on the Biological Resources Map.

Other Unique Features/Resources

Include a brief description of any unique features/resources, including, but not limited to:

- Wildlife Corridors and Linkages
- Topography/Connectivity
- Regional or Local Setting
- Other biological functions such as foraging, hill-topping, roosting, rock outcroppings
- Sensitive soils

Significance of Project Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

The letter report shall discuss all significant impacts to biological resources, and shall propose applicable and feasible mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts

A reasonable list of cumulative projects should be compiled based on past, present, and future projects that could also cumulatively contribute to the project's significant biological impacts. Analyze the significance of the cumulative impact. Determine whether the project makes a cumulatively considerable contribution to the impact. The report should address each resource in terms of potential cumulative impacts. When the project's contribution to the cumulative impact is significant, the analysis

should include a discussion of mitigating effects of existing regional conservation plans if applicable. Mitigation may also include a reduction in the project's contribution, or a specific on- or off-site mitigation plan.

References

Preparer and Persons/Organizations Contacted

Biological Resource Letter Reports must be prepared by a County-approved consultant.

Attachments

The following documents should be included in the report, either in the text (if size is appropriate) or as an Attachment:

- Observed Species Lists, Flora and Fauna. A list of all species identified on the site, including the common name, scientific name and the vegetation community in which the species was identified.
- Potential Sensitive Species List, Flora and Fauna (format follows) to contain all sensitive species with the potential to reside, forage or otherwise use the site. The County will provide a list of sensitive plant and animal species with the potential to exist on the project site. The report shall include each sensitive species on the list in table form documenting its sensitivity status (County, State and Federal, as appropriate), its preferred habitat and whether it was detected on-site by direct or indirect evidence. If the species was not detected, the table shall address its potential for occurrence (habitat assessment) with facts to support each conclusion. Sensitivity codes shall be defined at the end of the table.
- California Natural Diversity Database Form(s) (CNDDDB) must be attached to the final report for each sensitive species identified on site. A copy of the CNDDDB Form shall also be sent to the CDFG.
- Biological Resources Map including a reduced copy within the letter report.
- Open Space Map including a reduced copy of the Open Space Map in the report, if Open Space is proposed.
- Signed survey reports for all directed or focused surveys. When applicable, a copy of the survey results letter sent to USFWS should be included.
- Vicinity and USGS topographic maps and aerial photograph if not included elsewhere in the document.
- Any other documents necessary to supplement the information provided within the biological letter report.

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3.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE MAPPING GUIDELINES

3.1 Extent of Mapping Required

3.1.1 Project Boundary

Biological Resource mapping must include the entire project parcel(s) plus 100 feet onto adjoining properties. In rare cases where a project only affects a small portion of a large parcel, the need to map the entire parcel may be waived. If you wish to pursue this waiver, contact the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) Project Manager.

3.1.2 Off-site Improvement Areas

Any required off-site improvements (e.g., road improvements, fire fuel modification and vegetation management requirements, utility extensions, etc.) must be mapped in accordance with these requirements. Mapping should include maximum area necessary to complete the improvement

3.1.3 Off-site Biological Mitigation Areas

If off-site biological mitigation is proposed and the off-site area is not part of a formally adopted mitigation bank, the proposed areas must be mapped in accordance with these requirements.

3.2 Map Layout

3.2.1 Base Map

The Biological Resource Map must be completed using a base map that includes:

- The most recent project plot plan including all utility, road and proposed easements.
- The proposed maximum limits of disturbance for the project (on and off site); including grading, fire fuel modification and vegetation management requirements, septic systems, wells, construction staging areas, road improvements, drainage improvements, etc.
- Proposed Biological Open Space/Conservation Easements.
- Limited Building Zone Easements. These easements must be located adjacent to all biological open space easements to prevent fire fuel modification and vegetation management within biological open space areas. They must be a minimum of 100 feet in width but may be wider if warranted by the appropriate fire authorities or by the Fire Protection Plan for the project (where applicable). See Attachment B of these guidelines for a visual depiction of Limited Building Zone Easements.
- Existing Easements. All existing easements must be shown and labeled. This includes previously dedicated biological open space easements, steep slope

- easements, road easements, utility easements, etc.
- Topography (County topographic data is sufficient).
- Major roads and major road names.
- Both proposed (solid lines) and existing (dashed lines) parcel/lot lines.
- Assessor Parcel Numbers
- North arrow
- Bar Scale

NOTE: If the scale and the quantity of information on the map render the map illegible or overly complex, the map scale should be reduced or the information should be divided between the base map and an “overlay” map.

3.2.2 Scale

Acceptable scales are 1" = 20' through 1" = 200'. The maximum allowable size of the map sheet is 48" x 36". Each map shall include a bar and number scale. Regardless of the scale used, the map must be legible. Note: Scale should be appropriate to fit entire project on one sheet and to clearly view the resources and legend. For extremely large project sites that would not fit on one sheet at the above scales, coordinate with the County Staff Biologist to determine appropriate scale.

3.2.3 Multiple Sheet Maps

Biological Resource Maps must be one contiguous sheet of the entire project parcel(s) unless, given the scale and legibility limitations described above, a project's size prohibits the use of a single sheet map using the acceptable scale (a maximum project parcel dimension of approximately 9000' x 6500'). In the rare occasion that the map cannot be placed on a single sheet, a multiple sheet map is acceptable. All multiple sheet maps must have a larger scale, single-sheet index map showing the relationship of all detail sheets. Each detail map sheet must meet all of the requirements listed in this document and be of a consistent scale.

3.2.4 Submittal Requirements

For initial and other draft submittals, three to five copies of the Biological Resource Map shall be submitted. Upon finalization, additional copies will be required based upon public review and/or public hearing requirements.

3.3 Habitat Identification

3.3.1 Required Habitat Classification System

All Biological Resource Maps and studies shall incorporate the modified Holland code classification system for vegetation communities. A Holland Classification must cover all areas on the project site and surrounding area. The map legend must reference both the Holland numeric code as well as the Holland vegetation community name.

The following references shall be used for vegetation:

- Holland, R. F., 1986, *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California*. Nongame-Heritage Program, State of California, Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, CA, 157 p.
- Oberbauer, T., 1996, *Terrestrial Vegetation Communities in San Diego County Based on Holland's Descriptions*, 6 p.

3.3.2 Mixtures of Habitat Components

Where vegetation contains a mixture of component and indicator species from two or more Holland vegetation communities, the indicator species that appear with the greatest vegetation coverage shall be used to identify the vegetation community.

3.3.3 Burned Habitat

Areas recovering from fire shall be mapped using the resurgent vegetation as indicators of the probable resultant habitat. When the fire is so recent that no new vegetation has emerged, historical evidence such as aerial photos and the County's vegetation mapping information shall be used to map the habitat that was burned.

3.3.4 Previously Graded/Cleared Lands:

- Unauthorized Grading/Clearing – Areas graded or cleared without a legal permit or authority shall be mapped as the vegetation type present prior to the unauthorized activity (forensic mapping) based on County records and regardless of the time that has lapsed. Historical evidence, such as aerial photography or the County's vegetation mapping information, shall be used to determine the habitat that once existed.
- Legal Clearing Related to Preparation of Land for Development – Areas legally graded or cleared in preparation for the proposed project shall also be mapped as the habitat that existed prior to the clearing unless previous environmental review was conducted and appropriate mitigation applied. The California Environmental Quality Act requires assessment of the "whole of the proposed project" which includes activities completed in preparation for the project. Examples include geotechnical testing, septic testing, well drilling/testing, surveying and recent (less than 5 years prior to project application) clearing or grading (including agricultural clearing or grading) completed without a clear documented purpose. Historical evidence, such as aerial photography or the County's vegetation mapping information shall be used to determine the habitat that once existed.

- Legal Clearing – Areas graded or cleared with legal authority (i.e. upon issuance of a County permit) that are not related to preparing the land for development may be mapped as the existing disturbed land, developed land, agriculture or other appropriate habitat type.

3.3.5 Additional Habitat Identification Information

While Holland gives information regarding habitat attributes, the following additional guidance shall be followed in determining the proper code for disturbed land, non-native grassland, agriculture, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and native grassland classifications:

- Developed (Holland 12000) – Land that has been constructed upon or otherwise covered with a permanent unnatural surface shall be considered Developed. Areas where no natural land is evident due to a large amount of debris or other materials being placed upon it may also be considered Developed (i.e. car recycling plant, quarry, etc.).
- Disturbed Land (Holland 11300) – Disturbed land includes areas in which the vegetative cover comprises less than 10 percent of the surface area (disregarding natural rock outcrops) and where there is evidence of soil surface disturbance and compaction from previously legal human activity; or where the vegetative cover is greater than 10 percent, there is soil surface disturbance and compaction, and the presence of building foundations and debris (e.g., irrigation piping, fencing, old wells, abandoned farming or mining equipment) resulting from legal activities (as opposed to illegal dumping). Vegetation on disturbed land (if present) will have a high predominance of compaction, such as Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*). Although non-native grasses may be present on disturbed land, they do not dominate the vegetative cover. Examples of disturbed land include the following activities, if preformed under legal means: recently graded firebreaks, graded construction pads, construction staging areas, off-road vehicle trails, and old homesites.
- Non-native grassland (Holland 42200) – Non-native grassland is a mixture of annual grasses and broad-leaved, herbaceous species. Annual species comprise from 50 percent to more than 90 percent of the vegetative cover, and most annuals are non-native species. Non-native grasses typically comprise at least 30 percent of the vegetation, although this number can be much higher in some years and lower in others, depending on land use and climatic conditions. Usually, the annual grasses are less than 1 m (3 ft) in height, and form a continuous or open cover. Emergent shrubs and trees may be present, but do not comprise more than 15 percent of the total vegetative cover. Characteristic non-native grassland species include foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), wild oats (*Avena* spp.), fescues (*Vulpia*

spp.), red-stem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), mustards (*Brassica* spp.), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) and goldfields (*Lasthenia* spp.), among others. This definition is consistent with non-native grassland definitions in conservation plans adopted by other jurisdictions within San Diego County.

- Agriculture (Holland 18000-18320) – Agriculture refers to lands subject to routine and ongoing commercial operations associated with farm, grove, dairy or other agricultural businesses. Agriculture shall include: (1) The cultivation and tillage of the soil; crop rotation; fallowing for agricultural purposes; the production, cultivation, growing, replanting and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including viticulture, vermiculture, apiculture, or horticulture; (2) The raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and dairying; (3) Any practices performed by a farmer on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming or grove operations, including the preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market; and (4) Ordinary pasture maintenance and renovation and dry land farming operations consistent with rangeland management and soil disturbance activities. All such activities must be consistent with the economics of commercial agricultural operations and other similar agricultural activities. Irrigation or disking alone does not indicate an improved pasture. Grazing land (“unimproved pastureland”) continues to retain the biological value of grassland and may not meet the Agriculture vegetation classification. Agricultural land left fallow may revert to non-native grassland habitat or other native/naturalized habitat. An assessment shall be made as to whether the land now supports native or naturalized habitat after an absence of active agricultural activity, such as seeding or harvesting for four or more years.
- Coastal sage-chaparral scrub – Coastal sage scrub and southern mixed chaparral are identified by the dominant indicator species present. In cases where the two habitats are co-dominant and at least 50% of the habitat is indicative of coastal sage scrub, then the habitat shall be labeled as “coastal sage-chaparral scrub”.
- Native Grassland – There is often a debate as to how to delineate native and non-native grassland, particularly when one often occurs as one or more patches within a larger expanse of the other. Native grassland (Holland 42100) should be identified when *Nassella* and other native herbs including *Sanicula*, *Sidalcea*, *Sisyrinchium*, *Eschscholzia* or *Lasthenia* are present. The percentage cover of Native species at any one time may be quite low. An area will qualify as Native Grassland if more than a 20% cover of native perennial species is present using a 1 x 1 meter quadrat.

3.4 Sensitive Species, Other Habitat Features and Wetland Mapping Requirements

3.4.1 Sensitive Species

Locations/areas of observed sensitive plant and animal species shall be identified on the biological resources map. Sensitive species locations/areas should not be delineated from, but included within the mapped habitat classification that surrounds the sensitive species locations/areas. For species too numerous to map or where exact locations are not known, a notation on the map will suffice.

3.4.2 Significant Habitat Features

Habitat features such as caves, rock outcroppings or cliff faces, shall be identified. It is understood that many of these features do not have a unique Holland Classification. Therefore, while these significant habitat feature areas must be included, a valid and appropriate Holland Classification must nonetheless identify all areas mapped. Habitat features should not be delineated from, but included within the mapped habitat that surrounds the feature (usually as some form of crosshatching).

3.4.3 Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways

County, State and Federally defined wetlands and waters of the U.S. may be included within several Holland vegetation communities. These communities are typically riparian in nature, such as southern coast live oak riparian forest and southern willow scrub. However, a wetland or waters of the U.S. may occasionally be within a vegetation community that is normally considered upland, such as a coastal sage scrub vegetated drainage. The boundaries of all wetlands and waters of the U.S. must be mapped in addition to the vegetation/habitat per the Holland Codes. This can usually be accomplished using crosshatching or similar methods. In all cases, the treatment of land considered wetlands and waters of the U.S. should follow wetlands standards and guidelines at the County, State and Federal level, regardless of the overlying vegetation type.

The following is the County Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) wetland definition:

“All lands which are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or where the land is covered by water. All lands having one or more of the following attributes are “wetlands”:

- a. At least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes (plants whose habitat is water or very wet places);*
- b. The substratum is predominantly undrained hydric soil; or*
- c. The substratum is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by water at some time during the growing season of each year.”* (A “Non-soil” substrate includes, but is not limited to, rock outcroppings, deepwater

habitats (generally greater than 6.6 feet in depth), cobble rock, bedrock or scoured channels.)

The above definition of wetlands is based on the same basic attributes (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrology) as those of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, although those agencies have definitions with slightly different language and requirements.

Simplified Method of Wetlands Mapping – This method may be used in most cases where riparian vegetation, areas of potentially hydric soils and drainage features with a defined bed and bank are/will be largely avoided through project design and the applicant wishes to minimize processing costs. The mapping of wetlands and/or waters of the U.S. can often be completed with site visits and review of aerial photographs, and with topographical, vegetation and soil maps. Under this method wetlands and/or waters of the U.S. are conservatively identified to extend to the outermost limit of riparian vegetation (canopy drip line or scrub line boundary), hydric soils, or the defined bed and bank of a drainage feature, whichever is greatest.

Formal Method of Wetlands Mapping – A formal wetland delineation may be completed under the following conditions: 1) there may be extensive impacts (both direct and indirect) to or within the immediate proximity of identified County, State and/or Federal wetlands and waters of the U.S., 2) the project applicant believes that using the simplified method of wetlands mapping results in an overly conservative delineation of the extent of wetlands, 3) there is disagreement between the County and the individual completing the delineation. Under this method the delineation must conform to the *Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual*, understanding that the County definition of a wetland differs from the federal and state definitions. The boundaries of all wetlands and waters of the U.S., as defined by each of the agencies, must be clearly identified. When a formal wetland delineation is completed, a separate wetland delineation map is required *in addition* to showing the extent of wetlands on the Map. Data sheets or other information that was used to complete the delineation should be provided in addition to the mapping.

3.4.4 Wetland Buffer

The boundary of all wetland buffers must be mapped in addition to the vegetation/habitat per the Holland Codes. This can usually be accomplished using crosshatching or similar methods. The following is the wetland buffer definition from the Resource Protection Ordinance:

“Lands which provide a buffer area of an appropriate size to protect the environmental and functional habitat values of the wetland, or which are integrally important in supporting the full range of the wetland and adjacent upland biological community.”

The County requires buffers of a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 200 feet. The

following factors are typically considered in determining the appropriate width of the buffer: the current setting of the project site (natural v. disturbed), the quality of the vegetation communities on site, the presence/absence of wildlife, and the size of the wetland.

3.4.5 Oak Woodlands

For oak woodland habitats, the edge of the canopy defines the woodland boundary. The map should show a 50-foot buffer that contains the sensitive root systems of this habitat.

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[Attachment A]

Typical Mitigation Measures

When it has been established that a significant impact will potentially occur, the project must propose mitigation to lessen or compensate for the impact. As defined by CEQA (Section 15370), mitigation includes either measures to avoid, minimize or rectify impacts or measures that compensate for impacts by replacing or providing substitute resources. The following is a list of typical mitigation measures that may be included as conditions on a project that has significant impacts:

Biological Open Space/Conservation Easement

Required to preserve land on-site either as a means of avoidance of a particular resource or for mitigation for impacts elsewhere on the site. If the preservation is to be considered for credit towards mitigation requirements, the easement must be designed in accordance with the Project Design Guidelines. All restrictions and any possible exceptions to the open space easement shall be included in the easement language. For example, if trails are planned, they shall be listed as an exception with a detailed description of allowable uses and location (preferably referencing a map). Open space easements that protect wetlands will require an exception for vector control by the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) and may require an exception to allow future flood control prevention activities (discuss with the Department of Public Works to evaluate when this applies). In all cases where revegetation and/or resource management plans are required, easements shall be written to allow implementation of these plans, including allowing access by the appropriate habitat managers.

The only difference between an open space easement and a conservation easement is that the California Department of Fish and Game is named a Third Party to a conservation easement for enforcement purposes. Conservation easements shall be required for all projects within the MSCP when the open space is considered a Biological Resource Core Area (and therefore, part of the Preserve).

Areas Labeled as “Not A Part” on Plot Plans

This is not an easement, but rather a designation on the plot plan for either a Major or Minor Use Permit. These areas are protected just as areas within an open space easement. A Use Permit Modification” and subsequent environmental review would be required before these areas could be graded, cleared, developed or otherwise disturbed. In addition to designating the area on the plot plan, a condition will be placed on the use permit stating these areas are to remain protected for the life of the use permit. Any use exceptions (i.e., trails, etc.) shall be included in the Use Permit conditions.

Limited Building Zone Easement

This easement is required adjacent to any on- or off-site biological open space or conservation easement. The easement prohibits the building of structures that would require vegetation clearing within the protected open space for fuel management purposes. The Limited Building Zone shall extend at least 100 feet from the open space boundary. This distance may be extended if required by the Fire Protection Plan. The easement shall include the provision to allow structures that do not require fire fuel modification/vegetation management. See Attachment B of these guidelines for a graphic depicting the Limited Building Zone Easement.

Off-site Purchase or Preservation of Habitat

This includes the purchase of habitat credits within a County approved mitigation bank. Prior to accepting the purchase to fulfill mitigation requirements, the County may request accounting of habitat credits from the bank and evidence that the bank is managing the land appropriately. If the required habitat cannot be found within a bank, the preservation of habitat within open space easements on privately-owned land may be allowed. In these cases, a biological survey of the proposed mitigation land will be required to verify mitigation requirements have been met. An open space or conservation easement must be dedicated over the land. In addition, the County will require a Resource Management Plan for the long-term care of the habitat and will require an endowment of secured funding for perpetual maintenance of the property.

Revegetation Plans

To satisfy the County's no-net-loss policy for wetlands, any impacts to wetlands requires the creation of wetlands either on or off-site. A Revegetation Plan shall be prepared for all wetland creation and restoration efforts. Although revegetation is not typically allowed as mitigation for upland habitat impacts, a Revegetation Plan may be required to enhance or repair upland areas as well.

A conceptual Revegetation Plan outlining the draft revegetation plans will be required prior to project approval. The project will then be conditioned to submit for approval a final Revegetation Plan completed in accordance with the County's Revegetation Requirements.

The actual revegetation condition placed on the project shall outline any specific requirements for the revegetation project (i.e., acreages, types of vegetation, specific species, location, etc.). In all cases, whether explicitly stated or not, only native species should be used. When possible, the seed or plant stock used should be harvested from the vicinity of the revegetation site. A condition to dedicate an open space easement over the area to be revegetated shall be included as a separate project condition.

Root Stock, Seed or Specimen Collection

Some projects may be required to collect specimens or genetic material either from the general area or in some cases, specifically from the area being impacted. This may either be in conjunction with a Revegetation Plan or a separate species-based mitigation requirement. The condition shall provide exact requirements, including collection locations and location to be transplanted to or kept in storage (if a seed bank were created).

Enhancement of Open Space

This may be required when the open space would benefit from enhancement activities, such as removal of exotic species, hydroseeding or cowbird trapping. Enhancement may be required when edge effects from the proposed project are expected to be fairly high or when the project requests mitigation credit for on-site open space over disturbed areas. The exact enhancement activities required shall be outlined in the condition placed on the project.

Resource Management Plans (RMP)

A Resource Management Plan shall be required when a project proposes open space that would significantly benefit from active management and monitoring. RMPs are also required when a project proposes purchase of off-site habitat that is not within a formal mitigation bank. The intent of an RMP is to ensure the viability and value of the open space is maintained in perpetuity. RMPs shall be prepared based on the County's RMP guidelines, when a project proposes open space totaling 50 acres or more. RMPs may also be required when open space less than 50 acres is proposed if a particularly sensitive resource is present that would benefit from active management and/or monitoring.

Projects shall be conditioned to submit the RMP for approval prior to any grading, clearing or other development of the site. The RMP shall outline the timeline for any additional submittals that may be required, including monitoring reports, annual statements that all fencing/signs are present, etc.

Transfer Fee Title of Open Space to the County or Other Entity

Transferring fee title shall generally be required whenever open space is presented as a separate lot on a parcel map. The open space may be deeded to an established conservancy group upon the approval of the Director of DPLU or to the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). If deeded to a conservancy group, dedication of an open space or conservation easement over the land will also be required. DPR will review sites for suitability before deciding whether to accept fee title. If accepted, DPR will decide the terms and conditions of the transfer, including endowments, on a project-by-project basis.

Breeding Season Avoidance

Grading, clearing and improvement plans will be conditioned to occur outside of the relevant time period for any species of concern on a particular site.

Permanent Signs

Signs may be required where needed along open space boundaries or within open space (i.e., along trails) to prevent encroachment into the sensitive areas. The number and location of the signs will be based on a number of project and site specific factors, such as lot shapes and sizes, biological resources present, topography and intensity of expected encroachment.

Permanent Fencing or Walls

Fencing or walls will be required where needed along open space easement boundaries to limit encroachment into the open space. Similar to signs, the location of permanent fencing or walls will be based on project and site-specific factors, such as lot shapes and sizes, biological resources present, topography and intensity of expected encroachment. Permanent fencing or walls shall generally be required when open space is proposed within 300 feet of development or when open space is included within residential lots less than 5 acres in size. Fencing and walls need only be installed between development and open space and should not be placed between on and off-site contiguous open space. The design and materials of fencing and walls will generally be restricted when there is a biological reason to do so, such as needing a solid wall to act as a noise barrier or requiring something impermeable to limit amphibian or small mammal movement.

Temporary Fencing

Temporary fencing will be required along all open space boundaries where clearing or grading is proposed within 100 feet of on- or off-site preserved habitat and permanent fencing has not yet been constructed. Temporary fencing intends to prevent encroachment into biologically sensitive areas during grading, clearing and construction. Temporary fences are not necessary if permanent ones have already been installed (however, for many projects, permanent fencing is not installed until after grading is complete.)

Evidence That Federal and State Permits Have Been Obtained

Evidence that all required permits have been obtained will be required when a project may potentially require a Federal or State permit for the take of one or more endangered species (Section 7 or 10(a) permits), for impacts to wetlands (1600 permits from CDFG or 404 permits from US Army Corps of Engineers), or for discharges (401 certification from Regional Water Quality Control Board). The applicant may show

evidence that no permit is necessary by submitting a letter from the responsible Federal or State agency.

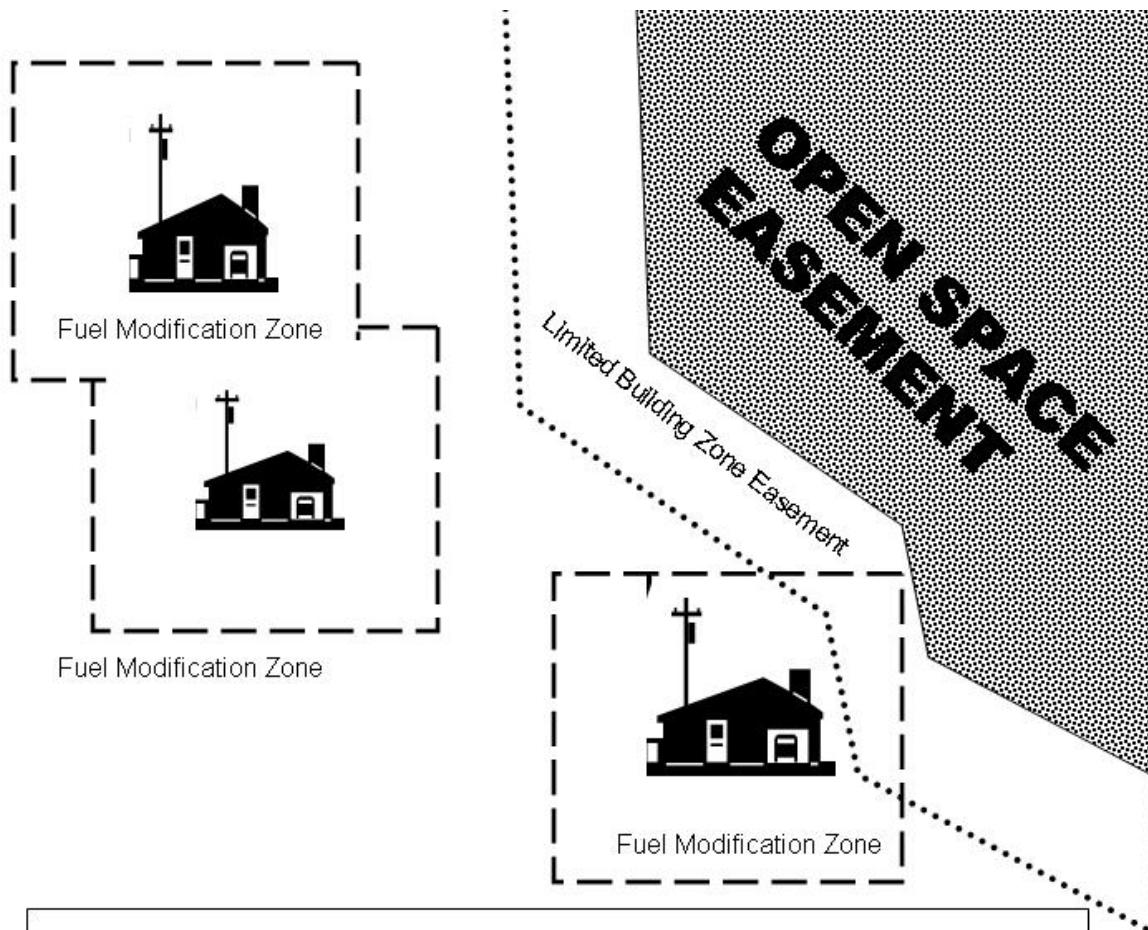
Restrictions on Lighting and Noise

Certain restrictions may be required when the project proposes lighting or significant noise within close proximity to existing or proposed open space. This condition is not enforceable on subdivisions or similar projects, which involve private residential lots adjacent to the open space. Therefore, lighting and noise must be limited in those circumstances by designing the project in compliance with the San Diego County Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.101-59.115), San Diego County Noise Ordinance (Sections 36.401 et seq.) and the San Diego County Noise Element. However, conditional use permits can be conditioned to control noise and lighting, including timing and acceptable levels. The condition would extend for the life of the permit and non-compliance would allow the County to revoke the permit.

Additional measures beyond those listed above may also be necessary based on a particular project and the biological resources present. Projects should be carefully conditioned to ensure the timing for required mitigation measures is both enforceable and appropriate. Projects should be conditioned to satisfy most, if not all, of their biological mitigation prior to all grading, clearing or any other disturbance to the site. The only exceptions to this rule are mitigation measures that may only be completed after certain actions, such as permanent fencing when temporary fencing is required during grading. In this case, permanent fencing would be required prior to finalizing the map. Be aware that inside MSCP, Third Party Beneficiary Status is only conveyed after all biological mitigation measures have been satisfied. Therefore, if the conditions on these projects are not correctly timed, an applicant may not have coverage under the Endangered Species Act for impacts to listed species.

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[Attachment B] Limited Building Zone Easements



The Difference Between Fuel Modification Zone
and Limited Building Zone Easement

----- Fuel Modification Zone
(also known as Fire Clearing Area)
Protects Structure

..... Limited Building Zone Easement
Protects Open Space

These Zones may or may not overlap

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